

NZ RELAY - WHAT IS IT?

In 2004 the government set out to establish a relay service for the deaf and hearing impaired communities. This service would enable them to keep in touch by phone without the assistance of friends or family.

Sprint, which operates a relay service for much of the United States, was chosen to introduce the service and subsequently contracted Counties Power in Pukekohe to provide the relay centre. The centre operates 24 hours, 365 days a year.

Check our web site www.nzrelay.co.nz for more information.

VOICE CARRY OVER FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

Initially users of the new service were the profoundly deaf, however, it quickly became apparent hearing impaired people could also benefit from using NZ Relay.

If you can talk using your own voice and have a hearing impairment, the NZ Relay 'Voice Carry Over' service could be ideal for you.

When using the relay service you will speak directly to the person you have called, and when you're ready to receive a response, the relay assistant will type what that person says back to your phone for you to read.

All you need to remember is to use the phrase "Go Ahead" when you have finished talking. This is the cue to the relay assistant that you have finished talking and it's time for the other person to talk.

Voice Carry Over is a very popular call type for those people who like to use their own voice, particularly as it maintains a level of interaction and involvement in the call so important to many.

Although all calls are strictly confidential, there may be times when you want an extra degree of privacy with your VCO call. If you let the relay assistant know that you want 'VCO with privacy' then your half of the call will be carried out with nobody listening except the person you're talking to.

If you would like to know more about the service or would like help in making a call, contact the NZ Relay Help Desk on 0800 471 5715 (voice) or by e-mailing helpdesk@nzrelay.co.nz.

Bellman Alert

Base Unit and Pager

The battery operated base unit connects to the telephone line causing the separate Visit Pager Unit to vibrate. The pager unit is small. It can easily be carried in a pocket or attached to a belt using the belt clip.



Separate pager units can be purchased to alert you to the front door bell, smoke alarm or baby alarm. However, NZ Relay supplies only the telephone units.



check it out

There are various accessories and services available that can make your TTY (Teletypewriter) work better for you. Visit our web site or call us on 0800 4 713 713 (TTY) or 0800 4 715 715 (voice) if you need more information.

RARE GLIMPSE BEHIND NZ RELAY

Working as a Relay Assistant is like no other job, where the highest levels of professionalism and service result in being invisible to the customer.

NZ Relay opened 2 1/2 years ago, offering the hearing impaired community the opportunity to use a phone service for the first time.

NZ Relay Manager Andrea Cooke says Relay Assistants are the invisible helpers that make the system work.

“From our perspective, a successful call is when the two in conversation forget about the Relay Assistant and get on with enjoying their time together. It’s no mean feat to do this seamlessly and without fuss when you consider we’re talking about one side of the conversation having to be typed and relayed.

“To achieve invisibility, a proficient Relay Assistant must be a highly skilled typist, multi-tasker, superb listener and with the highest levels of professionalism. The range of skills is similar to that used in a call centre, however the emphasis at NZ Relay is on giving our customers time to have a phone conversation at their own pace,” Andrea says.

Calls may take a minute to order a taxi, 20 minutes for a complex inquiry to a company, or even two hours to catch up on a friend’s latest news. Relay Assistants respond to the wishes of the caller at all stages of the phone call.

“We train our staff to act essentially like a telephone line – to transmit the conversation without adding to or detracting from the content. Our aim is transparency. Relay Assistants type what the caller can’t hear, and is very careful never to assume what the caller wants to do. All decisions relating to the call belong to the caller.

“To this end, it’s very important Relay Assistants not join the conversation. Please don’t be tempted to ask a Relay Assistant to join the conversation in any way or be offended when the Relay Assistant maintains their role. This may seem unfriendly but it’s a step towards maintaining your anonymity and privacy. Our Relay Assistants are happiest when you have forgotten they exist.”

Andrea says, with the service becoming increasingly popular, callers will need to be patient at times.

“It’s Murphy’s Law that when one person wants to make a call, a dozen others are doing so as well. We are continuing to track call statistics to improve our rostering and better meet the demands during peak periods, but as we do not put time limits on any calls, sometimes there is a wait.”

quick tip

When using NZ Relay don’t forget to say ‘GA’ or ‘Go Ahead’ when you have finished speaking.

PROFILE

ANDREA
COOKE

Andrea’s previous career as a nurse in the UK instilled the core values that drive her today: helping people; and making sure that help is available whenever it is needed.



The same values applied when Andrea moved to New Zealand and joined a power company to manage its call centre. Providing electricity is a 24/7 responsibility as is providing a relay service. Andrea knows you want your call to go through quickly and conversations relayed accurately.

Andrea is committed to informing the hearing impaired community how the NZ Relay service can help them.

HELP FOR HEARING AND SPEECH IMPAIRED

Remember to let your friends know about us. We assist many speech-impaired callers, as well as the hearing-impaired. If you know somebody who is unable to speak clearly, eg. after a stroke, they can enjoy speaking to loved ones again, through the relay service.

If you have a problem with anything, please let us know. Your feedback is a valued tool that we use in maintaining the quality and integrity of the service.

Contact NZ Relay Customer Service on 0800 4 713 713 (TTY) or 0800 4 715 715 (voice)